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SUBJECT: TALKING POINTS FOR UNSC CONSULTATIONS ON THE DRC

¶1. USUN is instructed to draw from the following talking points for UN Security Council consultations regarding the Democratic Republic of Congo on November 28.

Begin points:

--Despite improvement in the overall security environment and the success of the recent national elections, the United States remains concerned about the security situation in eastern DRC.

--In view of the unsettled security situation in eastern Congo, we clearly need to maintain a robust MONUC peacekeeping presence. Given the high demand for UN peacekeeping, the USG has previously indicated its desire for a drawdown plan for MONUC. However, FARDC troops must be able to stand on their own and security conditions must improve before downsizing can begin. The United States greatly appreciates the Secretary General's efforts to provide benchmarks that will help guide our evaluation of MONUC's progress and the potential for an eventual reduction in force levels in the future.

--While the U.S. is committed to strengthening the capacity of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) to deal with the negative forces in the east, MONUC must continue to play a key role in providing security and stability, especially in the Kivus.

--The United States commends MONUC's role in the DRC. Under Ambassador Swing's leadership, MONUC helped ensure security for the landmark national elections in 2006, and the operation continues to play a key role in protecting civilians and humanitarian operations, which remain critical to stability in much of eastern Congo.

--Despite these achievements, key challenges remain, including local elections in 2008 and confronting the remaining elements of the FDLR/ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other illegal armed groups in eastern Congo. The United States welcomes the November 9 Agreement between the Congolese and Rwandan governments, which provides a roadmap for dismantling the negative forces in the east. This effort will require continued cooperation between the Armed Forces of the DRC and MONUC.

--MONUC's upcoming mandate renewal, due by December 31, will be an opportunity to consider these issues in the context of the recent Nairobi Agreement. A key issue for this discussion is how MONUC can most usefully support efforts to address the remaining negative forces in eastern DRC. We look forward to deliberating with other Members of the Council as we consider options for MONUC's upcoming mandate renewal.

--Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to applaud Ambassador Swing for his years of extraordinary service to the UN. His performance as the Secretary General,s Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of Congo has been a credit to the entire UN system. We thank Ambassador Swing for all his efforts, which have been central to the process of bringing peace to central Africa.

End points.

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